

For Immediate Release

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This bill will provide health insurance coverage for 109,500 uninsured residents in the 13th District

Washington D.C.-- Today, Congressman Sires joined his colleagues in passing health care reform to provide quality affordable health care for Americans and control the long-term growth of health care costs. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that this legislation will expand health care coverage to 95 percent of all Americans, including an additional 32 million people, while reducing the deficit by \$138 billion over the next 10 years.

“With the needs of the 13th District in mind, I cast my vote in support of health care reform today,” said Congressman Sires. “This bill would expand health care coverage to the 23 percent of individuals currently residing in my district without health insurance and improve the health coverage of the 326,000 residents currently covered, as well as protect 900 families in the 13th District from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care.”

This bill will immediately begin to hold insurance companies accountable by prohibiting them from dropping coverage when one gets sick and ban them from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions. Additionally, beginning this year, young adults will be able to remain on their parents’ health policies until they turn 26 and Americans who are uninsured because of a pre-existing condition will be able to buy affordable coverage through a temporary high-risk pool. In the coming months, seniors will also see relief from high prescription prices with a \$250 rebate for Medicare beneficiaries who hit the donut hole and preventative services and immunizations will be free under Medicare right away. Furthermore, once signed into law, small businesses that provide coverage to their employees will be eligible for a tax credit of up to 35 percent of premiums.

In the subsequent years further requirements will be placed on insurers to prohibit them from denying or canceling coverage for any American based on their health status and bans will be placed on annual and life-time limits. Additionally, federal subsidies will be provided to low and middle class families to assist in purchasing health care; the Medicare Part D donut hole will be phased out over time; and a system of state-run health insurance exchanges will be created where individuals and small businesses can shop and compare prices and benefits of a variety of health care plans. Finally, along with various investments in prevention, wellness, and the health care workforce, the solvency of Medicare will be extended by at least nine years, which will assist in improving the program for the more than 72,000 beneficiaries in the 13th District alone.

“Perhaps one of the most important aspects of health care reform is the relief it will bring to 14,300 small businesses in the 13th District during these tough economic times. No longer will these businesses need to choose between offering health coverage or laying off their workers; they will now be provided with the necessary resources to obtain affordable coverage through both new tax credits, as well as a new health insurance exchange established just for small employers to enable them to have the same leverage in the marketplace that larger companies enjoy today,” said Congressman Sires.

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